

DAVID Y. IGE
GOVERNOR OF
HAWAII



**STATE OF HAWAII
DEPARTMENT OF LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

POST OFFICE BOX 621
HONOLULU, HAWAII 96809

**Testimony of
SUZANNE D. CASE
Chairperson**

**Before the Senate Committee on
WATER AND LAND**

**Friday April 13, 2018
2:45 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 224**

**In consideration of
GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 653
SUBMITTING FOR CONSIDERATION AND CONFIRMATION TO THE
NATURAL AREA RESERVES SYSTEM COMMISSION, GUBERNATORIAL
NOMINEE, ALISON COHAN, FOR A TERM TO EXPIRE 06-30-2022**

The Department of Land and Natural Resources (Department) strongly supports Governor's Message (GM) 653, nominating Ms. Alison Cohan to the Natural Area Reserves System Commission (Commission) for a term to expire June 30, 2022.

Ms. Alison Cohan resides on Maui and possesses scientific qualifications as evidenced by an academic degree in resource management, thus fulfilling the Commission membership requirements of Section 195-6, Hawai'i Revised Statutes.

Ms. Cohan works for The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i, as the Director of the terrestrial Maui Nui program. She has had extensive leadership and field experience in resource management through this position, as well as her previous positions as a field representative for the program. Ms. Cohan also has expertise in marine management through her research positions focusing on monk seals and whales. She has been deeply engaged in large-scale conservation planning efforts through watershed partnerships, invasive species committees, as well as management of the largest nature preserves in the State.

The Department strongly supports GM 653 and recommends that the Senate confirm the appointment of Ms. Alison Cohan for a four-year term on the Natural Area Reserves System Commission.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this measure.

SUZANNE D. CASE
CHAIRPERSON
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Testimony of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i
Supporting Governor's Message 653
Nominating Alison Cohan to the Natural Area Reserves System Commission
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Friday, April 13, 2018, 2:45PM, Room 224

The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i is a private non-profit conservation organization dedicated to the preservation of the lands and waters upon which life depends. The Conservancy has helped to protect nearly 200,000 acres of natural lands in Hawai'i. We manage 40,000 acres in 14 preserves and work in 19 coastal communities to help protect the near-shore reefs and waters of the main Hawaiian Islands. We forge partnerships with government, private parties and communities to protect Hawai'i's important watershed forests and coral reefs.

The Nature Conservancy supports the nomination of Alison Cohan to the Natural Area Reserves System Commission.

Alison has worked for the Nature conservancy for 11 years, the last 2 as the Director of our Maui Nui programs. She holds a master's degree in Natural Resource Management from the University of Denver, with an emphasis on climate change impacts on the East Maui Watershed. She has an extensive background in on-the-ground resource management, conservation planning, vertebrate behavioral ecology and Hawai'i's marine resources. Currently she serves on the executive committee of the West Maui Mountains Watershed Partnership and the Maui Conservation Alliance, and is also the coordinator for the Maui Nui ROD Working Group. Alison is an intelligent and fair-minded person that bases decisions on incisive analysis and balanced consideration. Her numerous positions with various alliances, partnerships and working groups are a testament to the respect and trust her colleagues have for her, as well as her deep commitment to conservation in Hawai'i.

The Nature Conservancy believes Alison will be a highly-effective member of the Commission and will serve with distinction. We respectfully encourage your favorable consideration of Alison Cohan's appointment to the Natural Area Reserves System Commission.

Thank you.

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East Maui Watershed Partnership

Watershed
Partners

County of Maui/
Department of
Water Supply

Testimony of the East Maui Watershed Partnership
**Supporting Governor's Message 653 Nominating Alison Cohan
To the Natural Area Reserves System Commission**
Senate Committee on Water and Land
Friday, April 13, 2018, 2:45pm, Room 224

East Maui
Irrigation
Company

The East Maui Watershed Partnership supports the confirmation of Alison Cohan to the Natural Area Reserves System Commission.

Haleakala
National Park

Ms. Cohan has played an important role in the planning and implementation of conservation measures in the East Maui watershed. In 2008 and 2009 she led the process to write a Conservation Action Plan for East Maui, and in the following years she helped lead the effort to carry out that plan. Since becoming the director of The Nature Conservancy's Maui Nui program over two years ago, her leadership skills have been evident through her successful management of The Nature Conservancy's Maui Nui projects including the recent expansion of Waikamoi Preserve in East Maui.

Haleakala Ranch

The East Maui Watershed Partnership believes that Ms. Cohan's expertise in resource management, environmental policy, communication, project management, strategic planning, and organizational leadership would make her a valuable resource to the Natural Area Reserves System Commission.

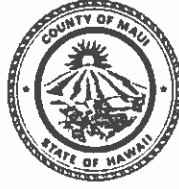
State of Hawaii
Department of
Land and Natural
Resources

If you have any questions please feel free to contact Dan Eisenberg, EMWP Program Manager at (808) 573-6999 or coordinator@eastmauiwatershed.org.

The Nature
Conservancy

ALAN ARAKAWA
MAYOR

TEENA RASMUSSEN
OED DIRECTOR



OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

COUNTY OF MAUI

2200 MAIN STREET, SUITE 305, WAILUKU, MAUI, HAWAII 96793, USA
Telephone: (808) 270-7710 Email: economic.development@mauicounty.gov

April 12, 2018

TO: Karl Rhoads, Chair and members
Senate Committee on Water and Land

FROM: Testimony of Rob Parsons, Maui County Environmental Coordinator

RE: SUPPORT FOR GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE 653, NOMINATING ALISON COHEN TO THE NATURAL
AREA RESERVE SYSTEM COMMISSION

HEARING DATE: Friday, April 13, 2018, 2:45pm, Room # 224

Aloha Honorable Chair Rhoads and members;

I am now serving in my 12th year as Maui County Environmental Coordinator and also serve as a member of the State Environmental Council.

I have been pleased to work with Alison Cohen over the past several years, both in her capacity with the Nature Conservancy (TNC) of Hawaii, Maui Nui projects and in a leadership role with the Maui Conservation Alliance. I strongly support her nomination to bring her wealth of knowledge and experience to serve as a member of the Natural Area Reserve System (NARS) Commission.

Alison brings a collaborative, pragmatic style to groups with whom she works. Her strong conservation ethics and her understanding of in-the-field management will likely serve the State of Hawaii well in addressing potential purchases, and current management of NARS parcels.

You are very fortunate to have such a qualified, capable nominee before you. Should you have any questions, I'd be glad to address them.

Mahalo nui loa,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Parsons". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rob Parsons
CC: Teena Rasmussen, Director

GM-653

Submitted on: 4/11/2018 8:06:09 PM

Testimony for WTL on 4/13/2018 2:45:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Benton Kealii Pang, Ph.D.	Individual	Support	No

Comments:

April 5, 2018

The Honorable Karl Rhoads
Chair, Senate Committee on Water and Land
State Capitol, Room 204
Honolulu, HI 96813

Re: Nomination to the Natural Area Reserves System Commission

Dear Senator Rhoads:

I am pleased to be nominated to serve as a Commissioner on the Natural Area Reserves System Commission. Please find my statements below to address your questions from the letter dated March 29, 2018.

1. Please describe your understanding of the role and jurisdiction of the Natural Area Reserves System.

The Hawai'i Natural Area Reserves System (NARS) was established to preserve certain land and water areas, in perpetuity, which support the native floral and faunal communities and geological sites of Hawai'i. The NARS currently covers 21 reserves across five islands, encompassing 123,810 acres of the State's most biodiverse ecosystems, ranging from marine and coastal environments to lava flows, tropical rainforests, and alpine desert. The Reserves in the NARS are home to a wide variety of rare and endangered plants and animals found nowhere else on Earth.

2. How do you perceive the role and responsibilities of a Natural Area Reserves System Commission (Commission) member?

The Commission members act as an advisory body for the Hawai'i Board of Land and Natural Resources (BLNR), which sets policies for the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR). HRS §195-7 states that the duties and powers of the Commission include:

- (1) Establishing criteria for determining whether an area is suitable for inclusion within the NARS;
- (2) Conducting studies of areas for possible inclusion within the NARS;
- (3) Recommending areas suitable for inclusion within the NARS;
- (4) Establishing policies and criteria regarding the management, protection, and permitted uses NARS' areas;

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- (5) Advising the governor and the Department on matters related to preserving Hawai'i's unique natural resources;
- (6) Developing methods of strengthening and extending presently established preserves, sanctuaries, and refuges within the State;
- (7) Advising the Department and other public agencies managing state-owned land or natural resources regarding areas under their respective jurisdictions which are or may be appropriate for designation as natural area reserves; and
- (8) That during these activities, Commissioners should consult the most comprehensive up-to-date compilation of scientific data on the communities of natural flora and fauna of Hawai'i.

3. Why do you wish to be a member of the Commission? Please note if you applied to be nominated to the Commission or if you were invited to apply.

I wish to serve as a Commissioner to order to positively impact Hawaii's unique and incredibly biodiverse ecosystems. We are fortunate to still have significant endangered and endemic flora and fauna left in the NARS, but Hawaii's natural resources are under siege from invasive species and other threats, and they greatly deserve our attention and preservation efforts. I feel a responsibility to do what I can to help conserve Hawaii's remaining native communities and species, and serving on the Commission provides an avenue to use my experience and knowledge to help Hawaiian ecosystems.

I sent in a general application to serve on a State Board or Commission, and was later asked if I would be willing to serve on the NARSC.

4. Please describe why you believe that you are qualified for the position of Commission member who possesses an academic degree in resource management.

I hold a Master of Applied Science degree in Environmental Policy and Management, with a concentration in Natural Resource Management, obtained from the University of Denver in 2009. I graduated Cum Laude with a Bachelor's degree in Animal Behavior from Southwestern University in 1996. I currently am the Director of The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i's Maui Nui Forest Program, and have worked for TNC Maui program for over 10 years.

5. What do you hope to accomplish during your term of service on the Commission?

I hope to uphold and contribute towards the purpose of the Commission to advise the Board on policies set by the Department, and to further the goals and intent of the Natural Area Reserves System. I plan to participate in a meaningful way and provide needed input for consideration on the matters that come before the Commission. For example, in July 2017 the National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) requested a permit to establish a tower and long-term monitoring site in the Pu'u Maka'ala Natural Area Reserve. My Master's education included courses on the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, and National Historic Preservation Act, all of which are complicated federal laws that apply to this situation. In my daily work as The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i's Maui Nui Forest Program Director, I handle federal, state, and county compliance issues and am

familiar with these laws and processes. In this situation for the NEON permit, I would be able to provide compliance guidance and input, as well as identify potential issues in establishing a monitoring site that could impact or benefit the area's natural resources.

6. What issues do you believe that the Commission has handled well in the past? What issues do you believe that the Commission should address in the future?

I believe that the Commission has appropriately acted as a sounding board for many of the complex projects that are brought to the Commission for input, such as the release of 'alalā in to the Pu'u Maka'ala NAR. This is a difficult project that required years of planning, and requires constant attention and refinement. The diversity of the Commissioners allows for multiple perspectives and greater scrutiny, thereby allowing the Board and the people of Hawai'i to feel more at ease with decisions made by the Department for such complicated matters. Another project that I've noted that the Commission handled well was dealing with overuse and resource impact at the 'Ahihi-Kina'u NAR, where there was also a major safety issue with unexploded ordinance. The Commission's advice to close the NAR to public access for a significant time period while the issues were addressed was difficult but important for resource and human health.

In the future, I hope that the Commission will actively engage and provide critiques on the wide variety of projects impacting all 123,810 acres of NAR lands. I believe that the Commission should engage enthusiastically as needed when issues arise that could impact the NARS and its myriad resources. In addition, as stated in the purpose of the Commission in HRS §195-1, the Commission should consider additional areas of land and shoreline to be set aside for protection and preservation.

7. Can you foresee any possible conflicts of interests involving you that could arise during your service on the Commission? How would you overcome any possible conflicts of interest?

The Commission provides recommendations to the BLNR regarding whether to approve funding to The Nature Conservancy of Hawai'i (my employer) from DLNR's Division of Forestry and Wildlife through the Natural Area Partnership Program (NAPP) for eight separate Conservancy Preserves throughout the State. These NAPP contracts come before the Commission every six years. Should any of these NAPP contracts come up for consideration during my tenure on the Commission, I would immediately remind the other Commissioners and the DLNR of the conflict and then recuse myself from the deliberation and any vote(s). I would take the same action should any other TNC-related project considerations occur while I was serving on the Commission.

8. Is there any other information regarding your experience and background that you believe should be considered for your nomination?

My Master's degree capstone was on adaptation strategies to climate change for East Maui's montane ecosystems. In addition to my terrestrial experience, I have over 15 years' experience working in marine research and conservation, both in Hawai'i and

other areas of the Pacific and Atlantic. This includes research on Hawaiian monk seals, humpback whales and toothed whales of Maui County, and conservation efforts towards coral reef ecosystems, dolphins, and whales throughout Hawai'i. I am an alumna of the Ka Ipu Kukui Maui County leadership fellowship; I graduated in 2014. I have lived on Maui for almost 20 years.

Mahalo nui for the opportunity to serve the state and people of Hawai'i.

Alison Cohan

Alison Cohan